

Project Business Case

Project Name: North Dakota Election Administration System

Project Short Name: EAS

Agency: North Dakota Secretary of State

Business Unit/Program Area: Elections/HAVA

Type of Project: New Initiative

Date: February 17, 2006

Version: 021706 Final

Project Description:

As the state's chief election official, the Secretary of State is charged with the oversight of all elections, including administration of state election law, election official training, candidate certification and filings, campaign finance and disclosure oversight, and compilation of election results [NDCC 16.1-01].

To comply with the statutory requirements for the state's chief election official, the Secretary of State's office created and implemented an Election Management System (EMS) for the purpose of gathering, combining, and providing election results from the state's 53 counties to the general public, candidates, political parties, and the media, via the Secretary of State's website; and in accordance with the federal Help America Vote Act, contracted for and implemented a uniform statewide voting system to achieve both second-chance and accessible voting options. As a major part of the uniform voting system procurement, a software program known as Unity OnLine (UOL) was implemented to provide counties a more efficient venue for creating election definitions, managing ballot styles, and aggregating election results from every precinct.

The Election Administration System (EAS) project will complete the Secretary of State's election improvement program by tying together under the umbrella of the PowerProfile EE (P^2E^2), the uniform election system, including the UOL program, and the State's EMS. This robust and comprehensive election administration tool will provide a single point of entry for all election definitions. The EAS project will provide the state and all 53 counties a uniform and single administration tool in order to more efficiently and effectively manage elections for the counties and the State of North Dakota.

This project will complete the transition to a statewide Enterprise Election System using advanced technologies consistent and certified with current election practices.

Business Need/Problem:

The North Dakota Secretary of State is charged with the responsibility to continue to improve election administration statewide. Currently 53 counties maintain a variety of electronic and manual legacy election administration systems. The system demands vary between large and small population counties. Standardization of data is nonexistent creating a difficult environment in which to obtain and maintain statewide data relating to polling locations, including the accessibility of these polling locations, poll workers, and those individuals who have voted in recent elections. The state and the counties do not currently have a means to interface and utilize the statutorily available information within the statewide agency databases of the Department of Transportation, Vital Statistics, and the Courts for the creation and maintenance of the Central Voter File. The lack of a uniform election administration system (EAS) makes it difficult, if not impossible to standardize election processes in every county. This standardization is a major component of the Help America Vote Act of 2002, for which the state received significant federal funding to achieve these goals.

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Solution (as described in Proposed Solution):

The completion of the EAS will be accomplished through the implementation of the ES&S election administration system known as PowerProfileEE (P^2E^2) for the State and its 53 counties. P^2E^2 provides the umbrella under which all aspects of election administration and agency interfaces are combined. The comprehensive enterprise EAS will be available to all 53 counties, and will provide:

- advanced electronic technology
- standardization of voter information across the state
- standardization of poll books and reporting functions
- standardized petition processes and review across the counties
- duplicate checks across the state providing a single voter record
- providing at the state level a single source for the generation of voter report information to political parties, candidates, and political committees
- additional election management functions for poll worker management
- ability to schedule and monitor polling location information
- ability to utilize an electronic early voting system, providing ability to immediately update voter information prior to election day
- other state agency information will be incorporated and become a core value to the EAS

Consistency/Fit with Organization's Mission:

Covered under NDCC § 16.1-01-01, the secretary of state is to supervise election procedures – the county auditor is the administrator of elections. Under this statute the secretary of state has the following duties in the oversight of elections in North Dakota:

1. The secretary of state must be, ex officio, supervisor of elections and may employ additional personnel to administer this title. The secretary of state shall supervise the conduct of elections and in that supervisory capacity has, in addition to other powers conferred by law, the power to examine upon the secretary of state's request or the request of any election official, any election ballot or other material, electronic voting system or counting machine authorized by chapter 16.1-06, or device used in connection with any election, for the purpose of determining sufficient compliance with the law and established criteria and standards adopted by the secretary of state according to section 16.1-06-26. The secretary of state, upon determining that any ballot or other material, electronic voting system or counting machine, or device is not in sufficient compliance with the law or established criteria and standards, shall direct the proper changes to be made, and in the case of electronic voting systems and counting machines, may decertify the electronic voting systems and counting machines according to the rules adopted under section 16.1-06-26.
2. In addition to other duties provided elsewhere by law, the secretary of state shall:
 - a. Develop and implement uniform training programs for all election officials in the state.
 - b. Prepare information for voters on voting procedures.
 - c. Publish and distribute an election calendar, a manual on election procedures, and a map of all legislative districts.
 - d. Convene a state election conference of county auditors at the beginning of each election year and whenever deemed necessary by the secretary of state to discuss uniform implementation of state election policies.
 - e. Prescribe the form of all ballots and the form and wording of ballots on state referendum questions, issues, and constitutional amendments.
 - f. Investigate or cause to be investigated the nonperformance of duties or violations of election laws by election officers.

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- g. Require such reports from county auditors on election matters as deemed necessary.
 - h. Certify results of statewide elections.
 - i. Prepare and publish reports whenever deemed necessary on the conduct and costs of voting in the state, including a tabulation of election returns and such other information and statistics as deemed appropriate.
 - j. Establish standards for voting precincts and polling locations, numbering precincts, precinct maps, maintaining and updating pollbooks, and forms and supplies, including but not limited to, ballots, poll books and reports.
 - k. Prescribe the order in which each political subdivision will appear on an election ballot.
3. In carrying out the secretary of state's duties and to assure uniform voting opportunities throughout the state, and for the purpose of implementing the provisions of this title and any other requirement imposed upon the state by the Help America Vote Act of 2002 [Pub. L. 107-252; 116 Stat. 1666; 42 U.S.C. 15301 et seq.] not otherwise addressed in this Act, the secretary of state may from time to time issue rules the secretary of state deems necessary, which must be consistent with the provisions of this title or the Help America Vote Act of 2002 and be adopted and published in accordance with chapter 28-32, but which need not comply with section 28-32-07.
 4. In each county there must be a county administrator of elections who must be the county auditor. The county auditor is responsible to the secretary of state for the proper administration within the auditor's county of state laws, rules, and regulations concerning election procedures.
 5. In addition to other statutory duties, the county auditor shall:
 - a. Procure and distribute supplies required for voting in the county.
 - b. Prepare and disseminate voter information as prescribed by the secretary of state.
 - c. Carry out uniform training programs for all county and precinct election officials as prescribed by the secretary of state.
 - d. Receive and handle complaints referred to the county auditor by any voter or precinct official involving circulation of petitions, challenges to voters, actions of election officials, or irregularities of any kind in voting. The county auditor shall refer complaints to the secretary of state or the proper prosecuting authority, as the county auditor deems appropriate.

Upon completion of the duties required by this subsection, the county auditor shall certify to the secretary of state, in the manner prescribed by the secretary of state, that the duties have been completed.

NDCC § 16.1-01-01 describes in broad details what must be done for election administration in the state. **P²E²** is the means through which many of the details will be accomplished uniformly across the state.

Goals:

- Enhance and complete North Dakota's statewide election administration system.
- Effectively convert data and standardize the data of the 53 counties of North Dakota to a single uniform and centralized system. Preserve content integrity, standardization and provide meaningful data from the conversions.
- One voter, one record statewide.
- Train the State and 53 counties on the utilization of **P²E²**.
- Accurate testing of the EAS prior to statewide implementation.
- Phased approach for statewide implementation.
- Complete the project prior to the June 2008 Election.

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Cost Estimate:

The estimated cost of the project is \$2.1 million. This project will be paid solely from the funds provided by the federal government as part of the 2002 HAVA (Help Americans Vote Act) and the state's 5% match for the federal funding.

Project Risks:

RISK: Integration of ES&S' UOL and *P²E²*.

MITIGATION: UOL Product Manager on *P²E²* team.

RISK: System Design and Scope Changes: Incorporating only functions that are included in deliverables for North Dakota specifics to provide a solution that incorporates large and small county practices into a full-featured system where counties ranging from small to medium to large populations can efficiently and effectively meet the administration needs of their county.

MITIGATION: Executive Committee represents all of the counties' interests.

RISK: Data Conversion Electronic and Manual. Counties' ability to cooperate in providing critical information and support as required, while remaining on schedule.

MITIGATION: ES&S will look at options to try to eliminate as much manual entry by the counties as possible. ES&S and the North Dakota Secretary of State will have detailed discussions and agree on timelines following the contract signing. Additionally, the ES&S PM will work closely with the Secretary of State to ensure the Status Reports pertaining to upcoming data conversion deadlines are closely monitored.

RISK: Counties have additional roles to implement HAVA ADA compliance. This will provide challenges to conversion input, developing, training and monitoring the system.

MITIGATION: The Training Approach and Change Management Plan will take this into consideration, as well as staff considerations for manual input.

RISK: In the current system, each county currently does not transmit voter additions, changes, or deletions to the state. This poses a potential change management and training issue as counties are used to current individual procedures and the new system will require a standardized process.

MITIGATION: A comprehensive change management process, working closely with the state and a thorough training program will mitigate this.

RISK: Change Management, county changes in process, routine, and technology, willingness to change. Moving to new technology can be "scary" for some, particularly the smaller counties.

MITIGATION: Communication